

***Barth Society will meet in Chicago, Illinois October 31-November 1, 2008 and in Boston, Massachusetts November 21-22, 2008***

Our meeting in **Chicago** in conjunction with the AAR will feature our usual Friday afternoon session from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and a Saturday morning session from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The presenters for the Friday afternoon session will be **Keith Johnson, Wheaton College** whose lecture is entitled: “*The Invention of the Antichrist? Reconsidering Barth’s Rejection of the Analogia Entis*” and **Kevin Hector, University of Chicago**, whose lecture is entitled: “*Election and the Trinity: How My Mind Has Changed*”. This session is listed as M31-307 in the AAR program and will be held in **CHT-International Ballroom South**. The Saturday morning session will be held in **PH-Clark 5** and is listed in the AAR program as M1-112 and will feature a *Panel Discussion* of Lewis Ayres’ book, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). The panelists will be: **Paul D. Molnar, St. John’s University**; **Kathryn Greene-McCreight, New Haven, CT** and **Aristotle Papanikolaou, Fordham University**. **Lewis Ayres of Duke University** will respond. **George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary** will preside.

Our meeting in **Boston** in conjunction with the SBL will feature once again our usual Friday afternoon session from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and a Saturday morning session from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The presenters for the Friday afternoon session will be **Michael Dempsey, St. John’s University** whose lecture is entitled: “*The Path of Total Surrender: Karl Barth and the Spiritual Nature of Theology*” and **Joseph Mangina, Wycliffe College** whose lecture is entitled: “*Ecumenical Ecclesiology with Reference to Karl Barth*”. This session is listed as **KBSNA 21-101** in the SBL program and will be held in **Beacon G-SH**. **George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary**, will preside. The Saturday morning session will be held in **Exeter B-SH** and is listed in the SBL program as **KBSNA 22-18** and will feature a *Panel Discussion* of Lewis Ayres’ book, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). The panelists will be: **Paul D. Molnar, St. John’s University**; **Willie Jennings, Duke University** and **Katherine Sonderegger, Virginia Theological Seminary**. **Lewis Ayres of Duke University** will respond. **George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary** will preside.

**The Board will meet for breakfast on Sunday morning November 23 in Boston.**

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**The Third Annual Barth Conference was held at Princeton Theological Seminary June 22-25, 2008. This Conference on Karl Barth was entitled: “Karl Barth and Theological Ethics” and was cosponsored by *The Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and The Karl Barth Society of North America*. The following summary of the Barth Conference was generously provided by **David W. Congdon of Princeton Theological Seminary**.**

Scholars, pastors, students, and interested lay people from around the world gathered in Erdman Hall at Princeton Theological Seminary for the third annual Karl Barth Conference. The conference began with a banquet on Sunday evening at which **Daniel**

**Migliore** offered words of welcome and introduction. He began by presenting the question which this conference sought to address: “**Can Barth, as a magisterial dogmatic theologian, offer significant help to theology and the church today in the area of**

**Christian ethics?”** In addition to noting the way Barth intertwined theology and ethics throughout his theological career, Migliore presented four basic questions that would serve both as a framework for the conference and as a way to probe more deeply into his initial question. Paraphrased, the four questions are as follows:

1. What understanding of God, humanity, and their covenantal relationship, forms the dogmatic matrix for Barth's theological ethics?
2. How are grace and command, gift and task, related in Barth's theology?
3. Is Barth's ethics able to guide public policy?
4. What is Barth's understanding of human freedom?

Migliore then discussed each of these questions briefly. His reflections on each question were an occasion for him both to introduce each of the presenters at the conference and to place their work in conversation with other scholars who have commented on Barth's ethics.

**Nigel Biggar (University of Oxford)** gave the first lecture on Monday morning on the topic of **“Barth's Trinitarian Ethics Revisited.”** Biggar is well-known for his highly regarded work on Barth's ethics. *The Hastening that Waits*, originally published in 1993. Since then, his work has shifted from theological ethics to various issues in philosophical and practical ethics. This paper was the first opportunity in over a decade for Biggar to reconsider Barth's ethics. In this reassessment of Barth, he expressed appreciation for Barth's attempt at a trinitarian and eschatological ethics grounded in prayer. Biggar criticized Barth's theological ethics, however, for being too narrowly theological. He began by challenging the centrality that Barth gives to the category of divine command, arguing instead that command and law should be subservient to the more fundamental category of “human flourishing.” Biggar argued that Barth's resistance to an ethics focused on the “human good” betrayed an overall failure to ground ethics in the lived experience of everyday

Christians. He proposed that we abandon the distinction between “theological ethics” and “Christian ethics,” and thus incorporate non-theological data into our ethical reflection. Christian ethics, as a project in existential self-understanding, need not always be explicitly theological, even though God's revelation remains the supreme criterion. Biggar concluded by summarizing his ethical proposals, suggesting that we develop a Christological and biblical account of ethics which engages more concretely with specific human experiences.

**Kathryn Tanner (University of Chicago Divinity School)** spoke in the afternoon on **“Barth and the Economy of Grace.”** She began by examining the “third way” which Barth advocates throughout his theology: e.g., between communism and capitalism, univocity and equivocity. This “third way” testifies to the distinction between God's kingdom and human kingdoms, allowing the gospel to claim us in every sphere of our existence. Tanner then examined Barth's discussion of capitalism in the *Church Dogmatics*. She found Barth's criticism of capitalist ideology and his positive affirmation of Christ's lordship to be purely formal in nature: there is nothing specific to capitalism in his critique of it as a “lordless power,” and there is nothing uniquely Christological to his alternative. Moreover, his discussion of capitalism is fundamentally the same from his early pre-Romans days to his mature writings in the *Church Dogmatics*, which betrays a lack of theological reflection. For the bulk of the paper, then, Tanner furthered her constructive project toward a “non-competitive economy of giving and receiving” in which all human relationships are thoroughly reordered. She fleshed this out in terms of Christology and the Trinity before focusing on the implications of this alternative economy for human society, arguing for the establishment of “common property” or “public goods” which enrich both giver and receiver. In her conclusion, Tanner stated that a properly Christocentric ordering of human life must not be identified with any available economic

option. Against both capitalism and socialism—which are both based on competitive relations—an “economy of grace” will remain the “third way.”

Following Tanner, **Timothy Gorringe (University of Exeter) lectured on “Barth and the Penal Justice System.”** Gorringe is a member of the Iona Community and has written extensively on theological ethics in relation to politics, agriculture, economics, and the environment. In his paper, he explored whether Barth’s theology offers resources for thinking through problems within the criminal justice system. Gorringe began by distinguishing between sin and crime and between retributive and restorative justice. His thesis was that Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation as articulated specifically in “The Judge Judged in Our Place” (§59.2) offers a dogmatic grounding for a restorative model of criminal justice, which seeks to bring offenders and victims into a face-to-face encounter for the sake of reconciliation and *shalom*. Gorringe then explored Barth’s fourfold explication of the statement that Christ died “for us,” in which Barth says that Christ took our place (1) as the Judge, (2) as the one judged, (3) in the judgment on the cross, and (4) in acting justly. The consequence of Barth’s theology is an ethic of reconciliation and enemy-love which undermines retributivism. As Barth wrote, “For the sake of this best, the worst had to happen to sinful man: not out of any desire for vengeance and retribution on the part of God, but because of the radical nature of the divine love” (*CD* IV/1, 254). Gorringe closed by arguing that our society should be marked by forgiveness and love, not by retribution and vengeance.

On Tuesday morning, the conference turned to issues in political ethics. **William Werpehowski, a self-proclaimed “Catholic Barthian” and Professor at Villanova University, spoke on “Barth and Just War Theory.”** In an attempt to align the two more closely, he argued that Barth and classical Just War Theory (JWT) both seek “to stigmatize

war without absolutely condemning it.” He began by outlining traditional JWT in connection with the statement on war and peace articulated by the U.S. Catholic bishops in *The Challenge of Peace* of 1983. He then turned to Barth’s reflections on (1) the ugliness of war and (2) the role of the state in promoting peace and justice. In each case, while differences between Barth and JWT were noted (e.g., Barth’s rejection of casuistry and his notion that in war every person is a “belligerent”), Werpehowski also showed how they were closer than many often think. In short, he argued that JWT can be marshaled in support of building a peaceful society which stands against the idolatry of “lordless power.” Werpehowski concluded by stating that Catholics must learn from Barth, just as much as Barth(ians) should learn from Catholics. In light of Barth’s statement that “pacifism has almost infinite arguments in its favour” (*CD* III/4, 455), Catholic communities and institutions should teach and practice this truth more faithfully by showing how JWT seeks to prevent war, and by making objections to war normative within the Christian community.

In a paper responding to Werpehowski, **John Bowlin (Princeton Theological Seminary)** queried the consistency in Barth’s treatment of war, and thus the cogency of Werpehowski’s interpretation of Barth. Werpehowski presented Barth as having a “presumption against war,” such that the burden of proof is always on the one engaging in war. Yet in his discussion of the state’s response to unjust aggression, Barth states that there is a divine command to wage war in response; the presumption is against those who would prevent a combative response. Furthermore, the “exceptional case” seems to be an exception to both the Old Testament prohibition of murder and the New Testament presumption against unjust killing, resulting in an incoherent moral theology. Bowlin thus argued that Barth’s ethics of war is not as precise as it should be and requires the kind of rehabilitation that Werpehowski offers.

**David Haddorff (St. John's University)** spoke on Tuesday afternoon on "**Barth and Democracy.**" Similar to Tanner, he argued that Barth's understanding of Christian political ethics forms a "third way" between those who see civil society as the agent of social change (the "dominant" group, including Thomistic and liberation ethics) and those who see the church as the only valid social agent over against the state (the "emergent" group, including Milbank and Hauerwas). Haddorff explored Barth's political ethics by way of an illuminating passage from Barth's "Table Talk," in which he offers a revision of Thomas Jefferson's opening line of the "Declaration of Independence": "We hold these truths to be evident, that all men are created in togetherness and mutual responsibility, and that they are endowed by their Creator with freedom of life within the bounds of a rightfully established common order." Haddorff then organized his paper around the themes of truth, ontology, and responsibility, offering a diachronic reading of Barth's ethical writings, from the political essays of the 1930s to *Church Dogmatics* IV. While Barth tends toward an "emergent" ecclesiology, following Daniel Bell's typology above, he offers a more robust account of how the church engages the secular *polis* because of his Christocentric *analogia relationis* and his covenantal understanding of the God-world relation. In the end, Barth's ethics of reconciliation lead him to state that "the gospel moves in the direction of the democratic state" and "the church always stands for the constitutional state." The ecclesial community remains distinct, while always advocating for a just and non-ideological political order which enforces the rule of law.

**Todd Cioffi (Whitworth University)** responded to Haddorff's paper by probing the *kind* of democratic state supported by Barth's theology. Haddorff spent much of his time looking at Barth's 1938 and 1946 essays on politics—translated as "Justification and Justice" and "The Christian Community and the Civil Community," respectively—but Cioffi showed that the 1938 essay fails to demonstrate

a material connection between divine justification and human justice, while the 1946 essay, by contrast, argues for a strong analogical relationship between the ecclesial and civil communities. Cioffi then sought to connect these two essays by looking at a key passage from *Church Dogmatics* II/1 (1940), where Barth states that God's reconciliation of humanity in Jesus Christ requires humanity to engage in the ministry of reconciliation. And because this reconciliation is actual for all people, every person is responsible before God, including those in the civil community. Moreover, since God's reconciliation takes the form of a "sympathetic communion" with the weakest and lowest of society, Cioffi argued that Barth's theology leads not only to a constitutional democracy, but to a kind of democratic socialism. According to Cioffi, Barth is not interested in just any kind of democracy, but a democracy which best reflects the fact that God came to seek and save the lost. And this must include economic democracy in which there is a redistribution of power.

**Monday and Tuesday concluded, respectively, with after-dinner talks by Robert Jenson and Karlfried Froehlich.** On Monday night, Jenson talked about Barth as pedagogue and theologian. Regarding the first, he told stories about how Barth treated students, both in seminars and in colloquiums. According to Jenson, when you challenged Barth, he did you the honor of treating you like Tillich or Bultmann, "against whom all weapons were fair." Jenson concluded by listing aspects of Barth's theology that he has "not been able to shake off." These include the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity, the importance of theological ontology, the centrality of election, the nature of eternity, the use of the language of event and decision to speak about the reality of God, and Barth's struggle against the German Christians. On Tuesday night, Froehlich told more stories about hearing Barth give lectures, beginning with a lecture on Christian ethics in 1946, when Froehlich was 16 years old. Barth's seminars—of which Froehlich

mentioned two that he attended, one on Luther and another on Catholic ecclesiology—were conducted under the gaze of a bust of Schleiermacher. Froehlich focused his talk, though, on the politically charged statements by Barth, in which he opposed both German rearmament and the violent uprising of any nation against communist Russia. He advocated a “third way” between East and West, in which the church cooperates with the state without endorsing the state. Finally, Froehlich talked about his decision to come to the United States, one that Oscar Cullmann supported but Barth opposed. Cullmann told him that the future of theology was in America, and for this reason, “Cullmann was the better prophet.” Froehlich concluded by stating that the future of Barth studies is in the United States, and particularly at Princeton Seminary.

The final paper was given on Wednesday morning by **Paul Nimmo (University of Edinburgh)**, who spoke on **“Barth and the Christian as Ethical Agent.”** In this paper, Nimmo explored what John Webster calls “moral ontology” in relation to the triune being of God. The essay’s architectonic began with the election of the Christian, moved “up” to the election of Jesus Christ in relation to the immanent Trinity (Christ’s deity), moved “down” to the election of Jesus Christ in relation to humanity via the *analogia relationis*, and then reconsidered the election of the Christian. According to Nimmo, Barth grounds the ethical agency of the Christian in God’s eternal being-in-act as the God who elects humiliation in the history of Jesus Christ. The triune being of God is determined precisely by God’s primal decision to become obedient unto death. In this divine self-determination, God determines the history of Jesus Christ and, by virtue of an *analogia relationis* between Jesus and all humanity, the shape of the Christian life that follows Christ in humble obedience. In his actualization of divine obedience, Jesus Christ is the pattern of human obedience to which our lives must correspond. This correspondence will take the form of a “radical downward trend” of mortification, humiliation, and the

taking up of one’s cross. We are summoned to freely choose humility in correspondence to God’s election of humility in Jesus Christ. The *telos* of this ethical action is a “double glorification”: a glorification of God by the human being, and a glorification of the human being by God.

The third annual Karl Barth Conference at Princeton Theological Seminary officially concluded with a panel discussion directly following Nimmo’s paper. Each speaker was invited to add anything to their original papers in light of the other presentations. There were disagreements regarding the place of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity, as well as discussions about the relation between Thomistic and Barthian ethics, public or apologetic ethics, natural law, and ecclesiology. In addition to this final Q&A session, conference participants met in small groups on Monday and Tuesday to discuss the papers in more detail.

Besides the plenary presentations, worship services were held before lunch in Princeton Theological Seminary’s Miller Chapel. Katherine Sonderegger (Virginia Theological Seminary) led worship on Monday, Darrell Guder (Princeton Theological Seminary) led on Tuesday, and Nancy Duff (Princeton Theological Seminary) on Wednesday.

**The conference organizers plan to publish a volume comprised of papers from the conference’s plenary sessions. *The Fourth Annual Karl Barth Conference at Princeton Seminary, entitled “Barth, Religion, and the Religions,” will be held on June 21-4, 2009.***

Check the Center for Barth Studies website at <http://libweb.ptsem.edu/collections/barth> for more information about next year’s meeting as it becomes available, as well as for a growing collection of book reviews that deal with the latest in Barth scholarship.

Submitted by **David W. Congdon,**  
**Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey**

## Remembering Thomas F. Torrance

At the meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature to be held in Boston on Sunday, **November 23, 2008** there will be a remembrance of **Thomas F. Torrance**. This is listed as **SBL 23-98** in the **SBL Program**. The program is entitled: *The Legacy of Thomas F. Torrance* and will be held from 1:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M. in **Adams A – HI**.

The **theme** of the program will be:

### *Thomas F. Torrance: Retrospective and Prospective*

A session honoring the numerous contributions of Thomas F. Torrance (1913-2007). Torrance was the Professor of Christian Dogmatics, New College in the University of Edinburgh (1952-1979). He contributed numerous articles and books; was the English translator of many works including Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. He was the moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1976 and the recipient of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion in 1978 for his work on the relationship of theology and science.

**Kent Harold Richards**, Society of Biblical Literature, Presiding (10 min)

**David Fergusson**, University of Edinburgh, Panelist (15 min)

**George Hunsinger**, Princeton Theological Seminary, Panelist (15 min)

**Bruce McCormack**, Princeton Theological Seminary, Panelist (15 min)

**Paul Molnar**, St. John's University, Panelist (15 min)

**Iain Torrance**, Princeton Theological Seminary, Panelist (15 min)

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The *Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship* will meet on Friday afternoon, October 31, 2008 in **Chicago** in **CHT-PDR 3** from 1 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. The Business Meeting takes place at 1 P.M. and at 2 P.M. **George Hunsinger** of **Princeton Theological Seminary**, will present a paper

entitled: *Thomas F. Torrance's Theology of the Sacraments with Special Emphasis on the Eucharist*.

At the **SBL** in **Boston** the **Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship** is co-hosting a reception on Sunday, November 23, 2008 from 8:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. at a location to be announced to celebrate with InterVarsity Press and Paternoster Press the publication of T. F. Torrance's Edinburgh lectures on Christology. The first volume, *The Incarnation: the Person and Life of Christ*, will be released this October.

## IN MEMORIAM:

### **Dr. Ronald G. Goetz**

What follows was adapted from a notice printed on Elmhurst College's website.

Members and Friends of the **Karl Barth Society of North America** were saddened by the news of the death of their former **President, Dr. Ronald G. Goetz**, Professor Emeritus of Theology and Religion at **Elmhurst College**, Elmhurst, Illinois. He was, as stated on the Elmhurst College website, a thoughtful scholar, an engaging teacher, a valued colleague, and a warm friend. He passed away on October 9, 2006 at the age of 73.

Ron devoted most of his professional life to Elmhurst College and its students. He earned degrees from Northwestern University (B.A., M.A. and Ph.D.) and Harvard Divinity School (S. T. B.) and had served as a Pastor before turning to an academic career. He joined the Elmhurst family in 1963 as an Instructor, rose through the faculty ranks, and, in 1986 was appointed to the **Niebuhr Distinguished Chair in Christian Theology and Ethics**. He served as **Chair of the Department of Theology and Religion** from 1990 until his retirement from the full-time faculty in 1999, after which he continued teaching on a part-time basis. In 2003, he was awarded the **Elmhurst College Founders Medal** for service.

Ron lived life faithfully and enthusiastically. He was a prolific contributor to the community's theological discourse. He published nearly 200

articles and reviews, many appearing in *The Christian Century*, which he served for many years as **Editor at Large**. His wide-ranging interests included jazz, and many will remember him as a visible spokesman for the Elmhurst Jazz Festival. At the time of his retirement, a *Festschrift*, or a compilation of tributes and short essays, was published in his honor by colleagues and fellow scholars (*Faithful Witness*, Elmhurst College Press, 2002).

A memorial service was held for Ron on November 5, 2006. Memorial gifts may be sent to Elmhurst College (Attention of Office of College Advancement), 190 Prospect Avenue, Elmhurst, Illinois 60126.

On a personal note, I remember when I first spoke with Ron on the telephone in 1994 about a paper that I was to give that year at the meeting of the **Karl Barth Society of North America** in Chicago. He was disarmingly self-effacing, warm and extremely knowledgeable. When he called me, he introduced himself as Ron Goetz. “the President of the Barth Society and all that stuff”! We had a number of very pleasant conversations thereafter. And I am certain that I speak for many when I say that I remember Ron as a friend, a pastor, a scholar and as a Christian who lived his life in humble service of his and our Lord.

**Paul D. Molnar, Editor**

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### **Karl Barth on the Offence of Revelation as Reconciliation in Jesus Christ:**

“There would be no offence in the truth as such, in the idea of the gracious intercourse of God with man and the grateful intercourse of man with God. On the contrary, why should not this seem to be acceptable and credible and even welcome? Nor could there be any objection to the existence of an extraordinary, authentic Proclaimer of this truth. On the contrary, why should it not be in order to encounter such? Boundless offence is caused, however, if in the person of this Witness [Jesus] we are directly confronted with this truth in a manner which does not allow of any distance or qualification, and if in this truth we are directly confronted with this Witness in a manner which does not allow of any differentiation between it and His person. The painful and scandalising thing which man [as a sinner] wishes to avoid is the identity between this man and this truth, between this truth and this man. For in its identity with this man the

truth makes an attack on him which it would not make if it were the mere notion of intercourse between God and man. And in His identity with the truth this man claims and indeed already possesses and exercises a power over him which He could not have, and which could thus be evaded, if He were merely its supreme manifestation or most impressive symbol. Since this man is identical with the truth and the truth with Him, the encounter with the truth and therefore with him—we refer to the encounter with Jesus Christ—becomes an absolutely vital, binding, decisive and even revolutionary affair. This is why the man of sin would like to escape it. He cannot accept this identity, and since he cannot alter the fact of it he tries to reinterpret it, to transform it into non-identity. The truth may be accepted on the one side, the man who attests it on the other, and thus separated they cannot violate or offend him, nor cause him any discomfort, nor demand any decision.” (CD IV/3, pt. 1, 440-41).

“The whole difficulty [involved in the statement that Jesus is the one and only light of life] would be removed if we could be content with the mere assertion that Jesus Christ is one light of life, one word of God: the clearest perhaps: a particularly important one, and of great urgency for us; but only one of the many testimonies to the truth which have been given by others and which have also to be studied and assessed together with His. In short, it could be accepted that He is a great prophet. This could be easily received, and perhaps even with great willingness and readiness. It could be warmly and enthusiastically championed. Many cogent arguments could be found for it. It need not be disputed by the modern Synagogue. It is actually stated in the *Koran*. It can be accepted by Western Idealism. With this message we need not expose or compromise ourselves, or provoke suspicion or unpopularity, or give offence to anyone, least of all to ourselves. Noble rivalry or peaceful co-existence is possible with those who prefer other lights of life or words of God. And, of course, we maintain our own liberty to hear other such words as well, and perhaps even to prefer them.

But supposing that we cannot be content with this? Supposing that the explicit or implicit meaning of the confession of Jesus Christ is that *Thou* hast the words of eternal life, Thou alone and no other (for there are no others to whom we may go), Thou alone not merely for me but for all others and all men, yet Thou particularly for me, so that I have no option but to hear these words from Thee? Supposing that the confession excludes as quite illegitimate and prohibited the free and friendly acceptance of many lights of life and words of God among which that spoken by Thee is only one? Supposing that the freedom of the confession consists in thinking and speaking in this way? What will happen when a Christian or the community or theology makes use of this freedom?

The objection to it, and therefore to the statement that Jesus Christ is the one Word of God, is quite obvious even to those who confess it. It has maintained a kind of eternal youth throughout the centuries. And because it does not come upon the Christian only from without, but first and supremely from within, the same is true of the more or less serious attempts made even by the Church and Christianity to suppress this statement, or at least to evade it, to let it drop. Such attempts have always been thought to be necessary and justifiable even within Christianity, and therefore there will always be a future for them" (CD IV/3, pt. 1, 87-88).

"His royal Word is His Word from the cross, the sigh with which He died. It is thus that He is the true Witness. And His truth, the truth attested by Him, consists in the fact that the reconciliation of the world to God took place when He (2 Cor. 5:21) was made sin by God that we might be the righteousness of God in Him . . . The solid and unbroken unity of God is the basis and mystery of the provoking identity of the truth there spoken and the Witness who speaks it. And the revolutionary love of God, which is present and at work both to kill and to make alive, is the basis and mystery of what is for us the most repugnant form of suffering and death of the Witness and the testimony with which we are confronted . . . God makes Himself known as [our] God, as [our] loving Father and Lord, Friend and Helper, who opens up to [us] the fulness of his treasures. But He does this in absolute independence of all presuppositions distinct from Himself, of all psychic or moral principles, laws, criteria or standards . . . He does so in His self-determination and therefore in His freedom" (CD IV/3, pt. 1, 442-46).

### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE KARL BARTH SOCIETY

Dear Friends,

Our Society faces new challenges because of the split between the AAR and the SBL. When a show of hands was taken at our AAR annual meeting last year, those present divided rather evenly about whether we should stay with the AAR or hold our meetings in conjunction with the SBL.

Because it seemed impossible to make a satisfactory choice, we are going to try an experiment. This October and November the KBSNA will hold sessions in both Chicago (AAR) and Boston (SBL). We will try to keep them as comparable as possible, but there will inevitably be differences, since the papers and presenters will be different in most cases. But this way we will be in a better position to assess what we should do for

the next couple of years until the AAR and SBL again start holding their meetings concurrently.

Although our annual dues are modest, they really make a difference. Because of them we are able to bring in speakers like David Bentley Hart, Alyssa Lyra Pitstick, and now Lewis Ayres who would not otherwise be likely to attend our sessions. We have also been able to help bring in high quality presenters to the Princeton June Barth conferences. Of course, holding double sessions at both the AAR and the SBL meetings will also add to our expenses.

I am indeed grateful for the enthusiastic level of support that you, our members, have shown for our Society's work. Please take a moment to send in your dues of \$20.00 for the current year. Make the check out to KBSNA and send it to Paul Molnar at the return address given with this Newsletter. Thank you.

With best regards,

**George Hunsinger**  
President, KBSNA

#### ANNUAL BARTH SOCIETY DUES

Everyone interested in joining the **Karl Barth Society of North America** is invited to become a member by sending your name, address (including email address) and annual dues of \$20.00 (\$10.00 for students) to:

Professor Paul D. Molnar  
Editor, KBSNA Newsletter  
Department of Theology  
and Religious Studies  
St. John Hall  
St. John's University  
8000 Utopia Parkway  
Queens, New York 11439  
Email: molnarp@stjohns.edu

Checks **drawn on a U.S. bank** should be made payable to the **Karl Barth Society of North America**

*Your annual dues enable the KBSNA to help underwrite the annual Karl Barth Conference and to attract keynote speakers. The KBSNA thanks all who have paid their dues for this year.*